





# The way towards sanity

By John Bayley

ROBERT BOYERS:

Lionel Trilling  
74pp. University of Missouri Press.  
\$1.15.

Harold Bloom has remarked that the best literary critics today are "negative theologians", and this seems to be true of the late Lionel Trilling. All his writing mounted a campaign, as scrupulous as it was persuasive, against the power of what he called the "unconditioned idea", against all ideologies which offer or assume the possibility of immediate spiritual or political emancipation. European critics have of course long taken the need for conditioned ideas for granted, but few intellectuals are prepared to be thoroughly serious about their status in the way that Trilling was, and in a sense had to be if an American audience were to take him seriously.

Auden, for instance, in his incisive throwaway manner, took brilliantly for granted in several essays what Trilling laboured long to demonstrate, but what Auden took for granted made no impact on an American student audience. Any specific argument that centred against the exploitation of liberty and the pursuit of happiness would have to be canvassed on the campus with a great deal of subtlety; and Trilling was at his best while debunking against radical chic, and what he called "false seriousness", their own sacred texts—Freud, Mann, Proust and the James brothers—while at the same time detaching his audience into a different, more sophisticated, and more subtly borrowed from an English Victorian, whose message it would have assumed too square to be noticed—Matthew Arnold.

Trilling's message in no way—in almost no way—resembles Arnold's, but in both cases it is the tone that carries the weight and has the same, tranquillizing function: to calm and satisfy us like the poetry that Arnold most admired, and to leave our public idealisms intact while at the same time wryly reminding us that they are not exactly what we live by. As penetrating as it is elegant, and as compressed, Robert Boyer's admirable study contrives to suggest in a short space not only what is important about Trilling, in relation to the contemporary criticism that he represents, but also the ideological climate, but how his status as a political and cultural theorist reveals the shape and probable destiny of cultural attitudes in our time, attitudes which Boyer, who is editor of the critical review *Scholarship*, has also reflected on in his book of essays on the American literary scene, *Excursions*.

He emphasizes in particular a leitmotif subdued enough scarcely to be noticed by the ordinary reader of Trilling: the position among his values held by the idea of a political and cultural idealism, a decorously equivocal idea, of the *tragic*. Though Trilling avails himself of the idea of tragedy in many different contexts he advocates nothing so crude as the tragic consciousness of life exuberantly and even brutally expounded by Kleist, Goethe and Stendhal and Unamuno. He argues as single-minded as any Marxist of yesterday or libertarian of today, but located in the most intimate and also most subtle of the most tacitly confident part of the self—both Blake's "ego" and his "identity"—whose consciousness most completely accepts its relation to the world outside and to its coming and end. This tragic sense could be called wonderful and comforting, with all the security of solipsism, lying in a delicate balance between danger and safety.

Those words are from Trilling's novel, *The Middle of the Journey*, in which the life of the hero, John Laskell, is changed by a severe illness which wholly reconciles him to the idea of death by making it real to him. In the process it subtly alienates him from the stochastically vivid ideas of his liberal friends, for whom fellow-travelling towards some Soviet-type future for humanity is an ideal never to be questioned nor to be properly examined. This illness of his hero is perhaps the most venial

able piece of writing in Trilling's work, lucid, humorous and purposeful, yet at the same time suggesting that the author has not himself quite got the measure and depth of what he is exploring. The symbolic aspect of the illness, the night nurse and the day nurse, have none of the ready-made confidence of symbols; the balance they suggest is loosely, quizzically, proffered; the tone is as tentative and relaxed as Trilling's prose. Professor Boyer defines this aspect of Trilling very well when he says that the pleasure we take in Trilling's tale is a pleasure indistinguishable from our reception of the ideas in it, which we may none the less reject, for in a sense the author is anticipating our rejection of them as a feature of his method. Perhaps he rejects them himself? "What we credit," says Boyer, "is the cogency and subtlety of the argument, leaving the particular ideas without yielding entirely to them."

Trilling wrote: "The pleasure I have in responding to Freud I find very difficult to distinguish from the pleasure which is involved in responding to a satisfactory work of art." I suppose him to mean that Freud is not "true" but that like a work of art he works on us by art's deep inner confidence in being not true but something, on its own ground, much more effective. This attitude to the great man would have been as unfashionable in American circles as Trilling's political and social attitudes were suspect to *biens pensants* who, like the founding fathers but much less rationally, clung to what they held to be self-evident truths. Just as the ready of political matters cannot remain in dynamics, however decent, which are clung to in this way, so the reality of the self cannot be established through the quasi-scientific claims and formulations of psychoanalysis. In both cases it is the examples of art, not those of ideological systems, which show us how to understand the needs of society and of our individual selves.

In his essay on Keats Trilling smuggled in, very discreetly, a characteristic paradox. Keats's sense of a lack of identity, his "uncertainties, mysteries and doubts" and the phrase "negative capability" which he used about Shakespeare and by implication about the creative being—these things really showed just how confident and certain an identity he possessed, to what extent he was at home in a self that was "certain of its existence, of its identity, and did not therefore require the armour of systematic certainties". It is this kind of self which Trilling especially valued, and which naturally enough he saw himself as personally possessing, and he sets over against it that surrogate personality represented by the Will, whose operations in this field were in his eyes increasingly and disturbingly the modern—and more specifically the American—version of the self, the self whose lack of inner coherence

impels its imposition on the outer world and its expression in terms of conviction and ideas. By implication the man of the Will, like the women of Islam, cannot have souls, or go through Keats's "vale of soul-making".

Like all theologians and evangelists, although he would have repudiated either term, Trilling had one thing to say, and he used his own knowledge and awareness of English, American, and European literature to say it, as he used his own considerable talent as a craftsman in fiction. The dual talent, in the service of a single theme, makes him a unique figure in the culture of our time, and has also—more surprisingly—worked a sympathetic magic in many different circles which has nothing to do with fashion and shows no signs of going out in the way that fashions do. In this model study Boyer reads him by his own light, as he was, achieving the same kind of scrupulousness and impartiality that Trilling himself so obviously brought to the consideration of texts and ideas. His short book tells us more about the *raison d'être* of the temperamental and moral approach to literary criticism than do many recent and more sophisticated attempts to form general theories in this area.

It is significant that he finds the fictions of particular importance in showing what Trilling would be at: in them we are undistracted by Trilling the critic's need, in his essays, to be always wholly fair to another author. It is clear what those few and meticulously made fictions are vehicles for ideas, but unlike any other modern novelist of which this is true Trilling successfully persuades us that the idea could not be introduced before the fiction set out; and that when it is concluded they have been explored rather than defined, as if the author were playing Patience, quietly confident of his skill at the game but not knowing how it would come out. The scene he sets up is always the same: a hero like himself, and a situation that in one way or another will bear out that, as Boyer puts it, "we cannot make contact with reality unless we have first made contact with the truth of our own nature". Handled by Trilling, this is by no means a platitude, for he is both delicate and rigorous on the question of what "reality" in this sense implies, and who is one of the first of his most revealing essays he takes a favourite text—Henry James's *The Princess Casanovissa*.

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## Conversation Piece

I sit and hear my mother and my aunt talking of dog-carts, of a century gone I try to imagine (there are some who can't). Their total age is 181. Under the clothes, the bodies were the same as those the striptease, shamelessly as cards, dealt to the watchers now. Just the same game but played by different rules; ripostes, on guards,

masks of all sorts, the flirting with a fan, a kind of fencing with an instinct. Who loved who they had their ways of knowing, woman and man. Something outside them told them what to do. They weren't direct like us (are we direct?), Victoria is there like a monolith but even nice girls know what to expect, how Zeus crept up on Leda in the myth—

without a visiting card, in fancy dress. No lady left the house without her gloves. Deafness makes meaning something they must guess, arthritis stiffens Venus and her doves, for three decades no lovemaking at all—heavily was jolly, with a motoring veil. There should be writing, writing on the wall: All sex shall fail, but love shall never fail.

Gavin Ewart

The Balzacian scope and breadth of social criticism in the two novels is indeed commendable, but they are surely secured at the expense of that intimate absorption and involvement of the author in his most effective novels. Even by comparison with *The Europeans* or *The Aspern Papers* they seem markedly two-dimensional, with little to yield up in further readings. And this is peculiarly not true of *The Middle of the Journey*, a novel whose significance continues to grow when the problems raised by its own temporal and political context may seem no longer specially apposite. The nature of Trilling's involvement in the tale, and his capacity to involve us, must be the reason; he involves us, I should have thought, more intimately than James does in the two novels he praised so highly.

Involvement defines itself in what seems a cool and relaxed apartness. This is especially true of the story "Of This Time, Of That Place", in which a Professor of English called Howe is concerned with two very different students. One of them, Tertan, exemplifies "the sad irony of a passionate devotion to the intellectual life maintained by a person of deranged mind". The other is an ignorant and vulgar arriviste who tries to manipulate and intimidate his instructor. The fascination of the story consists in the contrast between its evident schematization and yet the difficulty of saying what it is about, except the nature of involvement as such. The description of Tertan I quoted is from Trilling's own subsequent commentary on the tale, written long afterwards, as he was to write a retrospective preface to *The Middle of the Journey*. Tertan is in some sense a tragic figure, and through Howe Trilling seems to imply that the tale is the father's instinct to put his principles under before his tenderness for his daughter and his natural wish to join with her in a comforting way of escape from the destructive. And yet Tertan is not only a victim of the primitive; he manages to suggest that today it is the authentic and those who live by the Will who do not avoid it.

It is on the status of modern literature that he is at his most ambivalent, deliberately so, in an admiring, in a sense, its unpunctured duty to aggression, in an excuse to the hero, but in any case he is too disturbing to be cultivated to have done so would have been for Howe an unnatural and self-congratulatory act of the will. Tertan stands in some sense for the madness always lurking in what Trilling later referred to as the Authentic, to be neutralized by conditioned instincts and ideas, somewhat as the disorderly aspirations of art itself are harmonized by what Lamb termed "the acolyte of true genius", a phrase which Trilling made the centre of an early essay.

His ambiguous but effective use of the idea of the tragic comes out

also in the story called "The Old Margaret". A father and his daughter find their self-obligatory sentimentalism (in the face of actual meanness (in the American sense) of their negro servant Margaret, who accidentally on purpose breaks objects particularly cherished by the fourteen-year-old daughter, also called Margaret, Trilling father-figure connects a situation with a Rousseau piece of a black-headed king, to which he finds himself inexplicably attracted. The king is a prince of power and glory, the power is once made art the handmaid of dominion. That power is also, may be, the unfettered free spirit which ignores conditioning moral ideas, that same spirit of Americanism was to form a subject of Trilling's last book.

In this story tragedy is associated with that acceptance of fate which confirms the self and fires the Will, but with the ex- generate pride of life which is nothing to do with that unspoken and painfully slow balance improvement which received his father's approval. And in a sort of tragedy fulfillment was his shunned and turned away from indulged and yielded to only in his imagination. Although the fact of the father's refusal to build up a bank of human sanity. And in a sort of tragedy fulfillment was his shunned and turned away from indulged and yielded to only in his imagination. Although the fact of the father's refusal to build up a bank of human sanity. And in a sort of tragedy fulfillment was his shunned and turned away from indulged and yielded to only in his imagination. Although the fact of the father's refusal to build up a bank of human sanity.

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The seventy-three-year-old Adenauer who was called out to replace Brüning as the first Chancellor, worked for two decades later, was thus not so much a father-figure as a grandfather-figure to the new Federal Republic. Inscrutable behind his Asiatic features, and already overcoming the limitations of the sleepy provincial university town ("sleepy" is literally the word: many political rivals of the *der Alte* were unable to function in the muggy climate in which the Rhineland Adenauer thrived—and which he also found, incidentally, in the misty air of La Cote d'Azur when he withdrew in the summer to run the Federal Republic from Cadenabbia, Adenauer was determined to build back the infant republic from any temptation to follow not only the *Lebenskampf* of the first Chancellor of the Third Reich but the lost dramatic ones to which he had seen the Weimar Republic succumb. After all, it was as a mature politi-

BIOGRAPHY

# The grandfather-figure of Bonn

By Roger Morgan

HEINER BLUMENWITZ and others (Editors): Konrad Adenauer und seine Zeit. Volume 2: Beiträge der Wissenschaft. 744pp. Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt. DM 48.

There is something superhuman even in the bare facts of Konrad Adenauer's political career. The fourteen-year span of his term of office as Chancellor, 1949-1963, was not only longer by two years than the Third Reich in whose ruins he took over: it was also longer than the lifetime of the Weimar Republic (1918-1933), in which a little more than a dozen Cabinets staggered the stage in Berlin—while Oberbürgermeister Adenauer in Cologne was giving a preview of his political durability in the mayoral post to which he was appointed under the Kaiser in 1917, and only removed when Hitler came to power in 1933.

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cian, exercising considerable responsibility in the affairs of Prussia and therefore of the Reich, that Adenauer had seen the leaders of German ideological extremism and party-political fragmentation in a counter-productive foreign policy of intransigent denunciation of the peace settlement, and—perhaps most present—in his mind thirty years later—in the tempting but dangerous game of playing off Russia against the Western powers through the Rapallo Treaty of 1922 and its sequel.

The Adenauer centenary in 1976 has naturally swelled the already impressive flood of publications dealing with his life and works. There have been numerous biographical studies and books of reminiscences by those who knew him; an important collection of his speeches has appeared, including several hitherto unknown reports to the Christian Democratic party on his foreign policy and other concerns; and the collection and classification of his personal and political papers is inciting researchers to make new studies of several different aspects of his career. Among the most valuable and impressive products of the century have been two large volumes of essays, *Konrad Adenauer und seine Zeit*. The first volume consisted of recollections and evaluations by Adenauer's former political friends and opponents, foreign politicians and others who had had dealings with him. The second volume complements this roll-call of the great and the famous by offering contributions of a more academic nature: it aims to survey the current state of historical knowledge and opinion concerning Adenauer's career and to introduce aspects of it to which researchers might usefully turn their attention.

The twenty-eight essays are all devoted to the period of Adenauer's Chancellorship, although the authors often refer to his earlier experiences to shed light on his actions, after 1949, their main focus is on the major creative period of his life, from his assumption of the Chancellorship at the age of seventy-three to the time when he was finally persuaded to resign, at the age of eighty-seven. Adenauer himself in fact gave priority to this period when he wrote his memoirs: he began with 1945, and wrote four very informative volumes, but left the last of these unfinished, and he wrote the last of his earlier life which he had left until last. The essays deal with three main themes. First, the external relations of the Federal Republic under Adenauer; second, the domestic political system of the period; and third, the question of how Adenauer is judged today and how he may be judged in the light of historical research to be done in the future.

The primacy of foreign policy in this triptych is no surprise. Adenauer was his own Foreign Minister for the first crucial years of his Chancellorship (and remained so, de facto, when he handed over the Auswärtiges Amt to Heinrich von Brentano), because he was well aware that the infant Federal Republic, far from being a state with a foreign policy in the normal sense, was from the beginning a creation of the international system in which it had emerged.

Something which is surprising, however, is that the editors have given quite such prominence to Adenauer's relations with the Soviet Union, for the first of the eleven foreign policy essays, or five, Community dimension, which was Adenauer's views on European security is included. It is true that

Adenauer had a more constructive Ostpolitik than he was given credit for at the time (as the well-documented contributions here by Andreas Hillgruber, Rainer Salzmann, Dieter Blumenwitz and Boris Meissner make clear), and it is also understandable that the editors should have wished to give full coverage to this theme in 1976, for a post-Brandt readership.

However, Adenauer's Ostpolitik was really very subsidiary to his dealings with the Western allies. He travelled to Moscow in 1955, established diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union in breach of the so-called Hallstein Doctrine, and floated ideas to the Russians about a possible "Austrian status" for the GDR, essentially in order to be able to tell the West German public that he was missing no possible opportunity of achieving reunification (at a point on which the Germans were persistently concerned at this time, as is confirmed by the interesting chapter in this book by the public opinion researcher Elisabeth Noll-Neumann).

There was not, however, the remotest chance of Adenauer repeating anything like the gambit of Rapallo, by temperance, and calculation he was a man of the *Abendland*, and his main concern in foreign policy was to tie the Federal Republic irrevocably into the Western European community and the Western military alliance—naturally, on terms which would maximize her status and meet her specific interests. The main elements of this Westpolitik are well analysed here in the contributions on Nato and Germany's relationship with the Soviet Union, and the European Community dimension, which was as dear to Adenauer's heart (which he shared with his trusted Dulles but had no feeling

for the United States, and as Golo Mann says here, he "saw Great Britain as a good country, but not a good European one"), is represented only by Thomas Jansen's very perceptive study of the treaty Adenauer signed with de Gaulle in January 1963, his last major diplomatic achievement.

Inside the Federal Republic, as the essays by Rudolf Widenmann, Werner Klattefeller, and others show, Adenauer gave the Germans a period of stability which was badly needed and generally wholesome. With hindsight, it can fairly be said that the political conformism of the Adenauer period, the taboo on left-wing political ideas and the banning of the Communist Party were exaggerated reactions to the past of Weimar and Hitler, and even to the much more blatant repression practised by the German "workers" and peasants state to the East. The almost Wilhelmian restoration under Adenauer led fairly naturally in the student revolt of the late 1960s, and it also has to be taken into account in trying to understand the urban terrorist outrages of the 1970s. At the same time, however, the great majority of West Germans were profoundly grateful to the grandfather-figure Adenauer and to his economic wizard Erhard for the stable political institutions and the economic and social policies whose main aspects are discussed in contributions to this book.

Answers to the larger questions, of how Adenauer is judged by German historians of today, and may be judged by those of tomorrow, are suggested in the concluding essays by Golo Mann (born 1909), Werner Weidenfeld (born 1947) and Hans-Peter Schwarz (born 1934), the last mentioned being one of the editors of this collection, and also editor of the recent volume of Adenauer's speeches. Even if we discount an element of discreet panegyric which is inseparable from a centenary festschrift, the picture emerges of a statesman of quite exceptional calibre, behind a public manner with political opponents, which could often be brusque, he was extraordinarily far-sighted in his policies: Professor Weidenfeld documents this, for instance, in a very illuminating discussion of the perennially fascinating topic of Adenauer's Ostpolitik. He certainly possesses immense gifts of patience (reinforced, no doubt, by the discipline of twelve years of political wilderness under the Third Reich), and had the essential quality for a leader of knowing how to listen as well as how to talk. As Professor Schwarz suggests in his conclusion, many aspects of Adenauer's career will repay study by future researchers, and they will find this volume an essential guide, standing perhaps with Professor Mann's penetrating evaluation of Adenauer's place in European history. There is a story that when Churchill said to Chancellor Adenauer, "You are the greatest statesman since Bismarck," Adenauer replied: "Sir Winston, that is not saying much." Probably they were both right.

## Paradise Farm

This is the house anger came scolding out of, Filling the valley with a blistering mist.

Among the cosy sheep and preoccupied cows Who were doing the usual things with grass and milk

A shiver of rumour of horror twitched their flanks And raised their heads. The dogs had gone under tables

As he and she fought, with words hurtled like apples Till the tree was bare, and every windfall crushed

While tourists paused their cars to gaze at thatch, Orchard and meadow, envying such an Eden.

Elma Mitchell

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## Loosening men's hold

By Peter Keating

JUAN MCGRINDLE and SHEILA ROWBOTHAM (Editors):  
*Dutiful Daughters*  
396pp. Allen Lane. £5.95.

Of the women whose reminiscences are recorded in *Dutiful Daughters* Juan McGrindle and Sheila Rowbotham say: "They are not supposed to be typical or representative, but simply individual women talking about their lives—how they themselves, what they remember, what significance they give to personal and public events." If the women really are neither typical nor representative it is difficult to see why *Dutiful Daughters* should have been published in this form at all, unless it was meant merely as an arbitrary exercise in oral history, and in that case surely any other fourteen women (or men or children, come to that) talking about their lives would have served just as well.

In fact there is a strong, clearly defined purpose behind the book, and the interviewees have much in common. Most of them come from working-class or lower middle-class backgrounds and, in many cases, from Scotland; their political preferences are for socialism or communism; they have all experienced work, marriage, and childbirth; and most of them are attracted to, or interested in, the women's movement. Individuals they certainly are, but that is not why their views have been gathered together here. The true reason is given by the editors at the close of their brief introduction: "The autobiographies of this group of dutiful daughters is a contribution to the cultural challenge by women of men's hold over the way in which the world is seen, felt, known and understood."

The phrase "men's hold over the way in which the world is seen, felt, known and understood" describes precisely what is most deeply felt, and forcefully presented, in these memoirs. Specific instances of discrimination and prejudice are given, and there are some strong complaints against fathers and husbands, but the dominant underlying mood is not one of recriminatory bitterness; it is more a sense of relief that frustrations, guilt, shame, and ignorance, can be acknowledged and brought into the open. The unexpected shock caused by a first period is mentioned again and again, and not only by the older women. One girl is told by her mother: "When you're like that you just keep away from men." The terrified girl would literally run away from every man she met, until something nearer the truth was explained to her. Another girl visited art galleries to try to discover from the paintings of nude women whether public hair was natural, and decided it was not. At the age of fifteen the same girl, blazed by a boyfriend in the cinema, rushed immediately to the toilet to wash her mouth out in case she became pregnant.

All of these stories are told semi-humorously as the women look back on their lives, but the adolescent pain involved is real enough, as is the resentment at being expected to know instinctively about areas of life—birth control, keeping a house tidy, having and bringing up children—which are never discussed with them or explained. Some of the warmest experiences conveyed just this sense of guilt or ignorance being swept away, often in relationships with men. Here is the woman who apologizes to her husband for responding actively to his love-making and has to be assured by him that it is quite natural as a schoolgirl, rebuked by her teacher for reading "obscene books," the poems of Oscar Wilde, she had turned to her father for advice: "I said to him, 'Well, why is it obscene? I mean this is poems.' So he said, 'Well, the one you were reading, he had actually written it to another man. And I never knew that he was a queer.' I remember saying, 'Well you know that makes it even better, because I could understand it more.'"

To set against this kind of sympathetic understanding there is the narrow repressiveness of working-class life, especially in Scotland: "When she was fifteen she got a summer job and she went out and bought a book called *How to Attract Men*, and you know, a working-class Aberdeen background, her father

had a fit! He was climbing up the wall and screaming at her." And the same woman—talking there about a cousin—giving a memorable description of her own experiences at dances: "You know, these men used to come over and ask us to dance and we would carry them round the room until the dance stopped and then you sort of carried them back to their seats, they were so drunk."

The ages of the women range from just over seventy to about thirty, and although there are some obvious changes in attitudes as we move through the book and nearer the present day, these are by no means entirely to the credit of permissiveness: the attempts by women to form sexual relationships seem if anything more perilous than ever. The divorced woman, for example, who is "very selective" in her choice of men. "It's only ones with money, it's only ones in good position, and they've got to be married because I don't want to get involved and it's in their interests that they don't get involved either." If that sounds morally complex, here is a West Indian woman putting such niceties to shame:

Lizzie told me that she slept with Janet's husband just to get Janet, and Janet's husband didn't want to lose her so he was willing to share her with Lizzie. Well Lizzie only went with Janet's husband just to get Janet, because she was in love with him. And while she took on Janet, she had another friend named Sue, and Sue left her for another woman who could buy her car, and that woman had money, so she gave that Sue everything she wanted, and Lizzie can't even afford a car. So Sue have everything now.

It is strange, perhaps, that this book should work so well by encouraging women to do what in every stereotyped image of them through the ages they are shown to be best at doing—talking about themselves.

## The ways of the Isles

By Kathleen Raine

MARGARET FAY SHAW:  
*Folksongs and Folklore of South Ulster*  
306pp. with 32 illustrations. Oxford University Press. £12.50.

Fifty years ago the three volumes of *Songs of the Hebrides* by Marjory Kennedy Fraser and Kenneth MacLeod (published between 1909 and 1921) rose to prominence as a Celtic revival. To fulsome piano accompaniments the Kennedy Frasers popularized their "arrangements" of many beautiful songs. But reshaped to the conventions of the concert-hall, melodies crowded for, and by unaccompanied voices lost that purity of line and perfect timing fitted to the tasks they accompanied, setting the rhythm of woman or woman milking or spinning or "wauling" the tweed. Kenneth MacLeod, though a native of Elgin, seems to have been more concerned to make the songs known in a far different world than with the preserving of the purity of the Gaelic musical heritage. Even though phonographic recordings were made he freely adapted words to melodies. As with Macpherson's *Osian*, Moore's *Irish Melodies* and Burns's song collections, such "improvement" was seen rather as a duty than a crime.

This attitude of cultural condescension towards an inheritance of song unsurpassed in Europe. Margaret Fay Shaw's scholarly work has done much to dispel. No one had troubled to make accurate transcriptions of Gaelic folk songs before 1905, when an American, Miss Amy Murray, visited "Father Allen's" (later, "Father" James, priest, archbishop Allan Macdonald remains famous for his scholarly work on the Gaelic language. Of the hundred or more she then collected only forty survive. Margaret Fay Shaw's collection of more than 200 songs collected from many sources, with Francis Tolmie's *The Old Songs of Skye and the Hebrides* and *Folk Songs of John Lorne Campbell* and Francis Collinson, provide ample material for a critical com-

We apologize to our readers for the fact that this space is blank because of unofficial action by members of the Society of Lithographic Artists, Designers, Engravers and Process Workers.

## A question of upbringing

By Paul Smith

JONATHAN GATHORNE-HARDY:  
*The Public School Phenomenon, 1870-1977*  
288pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £7.50.

J. R. de S. HONEY:  
*Tom Brown's Universe*  
*The Development of the Victorian Public School*  
166pp. Millington. £5.95.

Readers of *Vivian Grey* will remember that when it came to the education of his son, "Mr Grey was no Elton, but his lady was one of those women whom nothing in the world can persuade that a public school is anything but a place where boys are roasted alive." Mrs Grey had a point, as the fascinating accounts of the nineteenth-century public school which fill J. R. de S. Honey's book and much of Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy's make clear. "The overwhelming impression left by both writers is of the horrors of the system whereby public schoolboys were banished from home and family at a tender age to expensive, insular concentration camps, to face the rigours not of the three R's but of the four S's—sex, sadism, sport, and scarlet fever. Those who survived the last stood a good chance of being bored to death by a classical grind suited to the capacities of only a few. Why did the British of a certain class treat their children so? Or, more portentously, what was the sociological function of the public school? Both books are in large part an attempt to answer that question.

Professor Honey is a professional historian and educationist, perched on a mound of footnotes and references, much the better acquainted of the two with the technical literature, and making use of primary sources in a way hardly attempted by his rival. Mr Gathorne-Hardy's chatty, catch-all approach scorns the support of a critical

apparatus. Some features of his book dauntingly illustrate what publishers will nowadays let authors get away with, even in what they allege to be "one of those rare books which illuminate man's estate" (is the profession of sub-editor dead?). It is remarkably badly written, full of rickety sentences, infelicitous ex-pression, and an inability to be concise. The author is disarmingly open about its ramshackle construction: "picking almost at random, we can discern a number of major themes appearing or, alternatively, note that they are significant by their absence." Apart from simple misprints (which also badly disfigure Professor Honey's book), there is a good deal of the not-quite-right. The historical background is inaccurate, and there are careless slips like "National Service League" for "National Service League", "Social Science Association" for "Social Science Association", and "Independent Practitioners of Advertising" for "Independent Practitioners of Advertising". ("who have good reason to get these things right") for, presumably, "Institute of Practitioners in Advertising".

This lack of precision communicates itself to the author's treatment of major developments, which are often only vaguely sketched. "In fifteen years, say from 1858 (an arbitrary choice), the edifice . . . was transformed." There are moments of perfunctoriness: "He [Royston Lambert] does not go into this (at least I don't think so). . . massive towers are heavy going." There is a weakness for bits of pseudo-knowledge gleaned from other fields combined with a difficulty in knowing quite what to do with them: "I put this in because I think it illuminates a certain sort of public schoolmaster; I am not sure how true it is generally. I would not have thought . . . More seriously, there is much retelling of malicious gossip, suspect reminiscences, and then *trouvade* anecdote about them were solid evidence. There is also some lack of caution in applying modern sociological

findings to the past. Mr Gathorne-Hardy makes much use of the Kinsey Report, and at one point, juxtaposing the repressive attitude of nineteenth-century British public schools with Kinsey's figures on the sexual drive of twentieth-century American boys, writes simply: "These two forces met head on." Yet, with all its glaring defects, his is not an unsuccessful book. It is saved by his enthusiasm, shrewdness and willingness to take on large issues. His ambitions are wider than Professor Honey's: he has set out not only to cover the whole history of making public schools, but also to survey girls' public schools, progressive schools, and even "schools which no decent person would dream of describing as a public school." If Professor Honey provides fuller and better information on a range of questions from accounts to public schoolmastering as a profession, it is perhaps Mr Gathorne-Hardy who in the end is the more evocative of the feeling, not to mention the smell, of public-school life.

In spite of some common gaps—one would like more on the development of school traditions, on the curriculum, and on the economics of schools—the two books are in many ways complementary, and their conclusions on the cultural question of the role of the public schools in British society largely coincide. Both see the public schools as coming to constitute by the beginning of the twentieth century a cohesive system, with characteristic forms and practices, consciously aimed at the production of an elite. Professor Honey is especially interesting in his ingenious effort to determine the precise composition of the public schools community in 1902. He gives up with about 100 bona fide public schools, and reprints a gallery of analysts from Laski and Tawney to Butler and Freeman for basing statistics of the public-school element in various elite groups on definitions of "public school" much

wider than those obtaining in their subjects' schooldays.

Both authors are clear as to what made Victorian parents consent to the extraordinary transfer of their functions of upbringing which the "extrusion" of boys from the family into the schools represented. It was not simply the desire to achieve social advantage, to find ways of establishing and expressing what Honey calls "family dynasticism", to relieve the burden of large families, and to separate boys from "low" influences (servants, local accents) at home. Above all, it was the pressure of the cult of manliness, the search for a system of character training, in which hardship, humiliation, even brutality could be not merely tolerated but seen as functional. Hardening and moral elevation were the essential objects, together with self-confidence, engendered partly by an almost automatic progression in status and privileges within the school, even for the undistinguished boy. The parallel with the initiation rites of primitive societies is stressed in both books. Education in the intellectual sense was secondary: "a bad man teaching history well," thought the Harrow house-master, Edward Bowen, "is a far worse thing than a good man teaching history badly."

A major preoccupation of Gathorne-Hardy's is with the effects that this system (whose substantial modification in the twentieth century he traces) has had on British life, not only among the public school educated elites, but even, by permeation of values, at a lower social level, for those who did not go to Eton often went, vicariously, to Greyfriars. He is particularly concerned to criticize Cecil Rhodes' view of the contribution of public-school education to the alleged decline of individuality, initiative, and efficiency in national life, but his own conclusions on a little indecisive. Arguing that the system sometimes did produce individuality and initiative, he turns

the Second World War into a caricature victory of one stereotype over another. "It was indeed precisely those qualities of individuality—flexibility, ingenuity, the ability to disobey—that were our great advantage over the Germans. So far from explaining why we came close to defeat, the public schools are one of the reasons why we won." But, six pages later, they led on the whole to a far too great loss of individuality.

In any case, it is difficult to separate their impact from the more profound effects of early upbringing: "they are often thanked for a stability rarely due to good nations". Gathorne-Hardy reminds us more than once that he is the author of *The Rise and Fall of the British Navy*, to which his latest book is avowedly a sequel, the second part of an ambitious attempt to survey the making of the middle- and upper-class Englishman.

The combination of the public-school ethos, percolating down through society, and the nanny system (staffed, of course, by the lower classes) he regards as helping to explain "the extraordinary cohesion of English society from roughly 1830-40 to 1940-50": a finding not perhaps sitting altogether comfortably with the statement two pages earlier that, because of the divide between boarding-school education for the middle classes and home-based education for the lower, "Britain is literally two cultures in a profound anthropological sense."

These are serious books on serious themes, but they deal with a subject which has more than its share of the bizarre, and both authors display an eye for the quirks and oddities with which the public-school world and its fringes abounded, from Professor Honey's resurrection of the nearly forgotten J. L. Breton, who bogged children and schools with sexual facility, at one stage financing them by loans on the security of damages he hadn't yet been awarded for injury in a railway accident, to Mr Gathorne-Hardy's rediscovery of the egregious Reverend E. J. Bradford (*Feasting the Low of Wales* and other apply titled collections of poems). Read them for social history, but read them also for fun.

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## Books for the people

By Richard Hoggart

**THOMAS KELLY:**  
*History of Public Libraries in Great Britain 1845-1975*  
582pp. The Library Association.  
£13.75.

**THOMAS and EDITH KELLY:**  
*Books for the People*  
An Illustrated History of the British Public Library  
271pp. André Deutsch. £15.

**K. C. HARRISON:**  
*The Library and the Community*  
125pp. André Deutsch. £3.50.

By any standards, the British public library has been a success story. It is not at all difficult to see how, later, the Newspaper Reading Rooms became one focus for these long-standing dreams within library committees. Nor did all librarians like them, unless they had a special sympathy with the old and the unemployed. Right up to the end of the 1930s those reading-rooms, especially on wet days, literally smelt of tired, old, shabby men.

Around the main battles there were from the start skirmishes, many with a clear class bias. Thus some libraries established—and some retained into the twentieth century—a system, with the better payers receiving preferential treatment. There was also the long-standing fight about open access. It is won now, but in some places only comparatively recently. Behind it lay deep-seated fear, again some librarians as much as their committees, of the very idea of anyone from the outside world actually having the run of the shelves.

The chief lines of the record are clear. Before 1850 the United Kingdom already had a surprisingly large and diverse number of libraries based on churches, grammar schools, great houses, voluntary groups of one sort or another and commercial schemes. That self-help spirit did not die overnight, as—among much else—the Welsh miners' libraries show. The 1850 Act marked a watershed because it established public libraries, funded if they so wished by local authorities with the product of up to a half-penny rate. Since the Act, the library has been primarily to the working classes, as did so many other educational initiatives at that time.

Not all local authorities were enamoured of the opportunities newly offered. Some, particularly those for rural areas, fought bitterly

for decades against implementing the Act. The urban areas, and especially five big cities (Glasgow, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, London), rose to the challenge in ways which eventually transformed the lives of many of their citizens.

These struggles for and against an adequate library service were like a microcosm of the arguments which raged in Great Britain when social reforms which cost public money—no matter if it is only a little—are proposed. The same arguments have been brought out for two hundred years or more. Thus, the opponents of the Public Library Act asserted that to establish them would encourage laziness among the working class (especially through the reading of cheap fiction), and that they would be a source of socialism, break up the family and spread disease.

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Step by step, the objections lost. Looking over the whole terrain and the whole century, one is struck by the sheer ingenuity and inventiveness of those who fought to establish and improve the public library system. Think of the many different groups to whom, apart from an undifferentiated general public, libraries were addressed: the unemployed, the children (a particularly successful area), people in hospitals or prisons, the housebound, the blind, adult students. The mobile rural libraries are a story in themselves, as is the provision of extra services which must have made the early purists turn in their graves—such as music, records and paints.

Professor Kelly draws the most

important single lesson from this whole story. The fine response to the library provision showed that the body of people are "more honest, more orderly, and more intelligent than had been supposed". Even today, we give ourselves such surprises: official British attitudes habitually underestimate the ability of our people to rise to imaginative opportunities. Naturally, progress in the library service was not even; there were troughs and peaks. The latest crest, the building boom of the 1960s, showed in a way unthinkable even fifty years before both the greatly increased scale of public commitment and the revolution in architecture and layout; those developments gave us some of the most attractive public buildings out up during the decade.

But now, in the late 1970s, the libraries are under attack. The security and such feelings do not encourage inventiveness. Not that inventiveness has been altogether lacking in these latter years. There has been good provision in some places for immigrants and for adult literacy programme has had fine support from certain authorities. Even more important, the approach to the question of censorship by libraries has greatly matured (with the Library Association giving a good lead) on the structural side, the recent formation of the British Library is a major advance.

Yet there is indubitably a great uneasiness in the field, a fearfulness; the hold on main purposes is nothing like as strong as it was a century ago. It is tempting to say, and I do not doubt it is partly true, that to find a sense of purpose is now more difficult than it used to be. But we tend to say that about all problems before us. It is true, too, that the late 1970s are a particularly dark time for all kinds of public expenditure. Yet the uncertainty of many people in the library service has deeper roots than these.

That uncertainty is a typical instance of the phenomenon of nay-saying myths. All societies and sub-groups need myths to live by, yet always recognize that societies can also become addicted to nay-saying myths—myths which explain just why it is impossible to do anything about a given situation.

The nay-saying myths which haunt many in the library system today (though not the specialist areas; they are buoyant) begin by asserting that there are no longer any people in the working class who seek "enlightenment" that there are no more "intelligent laymen".

That society has effectively sifted the educable from the ineducable. This explains, the story goes on, why the prime users of the public libraries and professional classes rather than from the working class. The middle and professional classes know how to use libraries; now their subscription libraries have closed they have taken over the public libraries. The working class, well weeded-out, are at bingo halls or watching telly. This is a gross error, but it has the persuasiveness of all those neat myths which give grounds for an elegant fallacy.

The second main nay-saying myth in the library world is a form of McLuhan-and-water. It argues that the age of print has passed, that television and other forms of electronic communication have done away with the need for books. It is the crucial failure, loses its faith in the unique nature and value of reading. To the best of my knowledge, none of these myths has been thoroughly faced in the literature about libraries; social and cultural analysis is generally thin in such disputes.

Take another major dispute, one which has been recurrent for thirteen decades: that the public libraries would be in the main merely ways of providing cheap fiction at public expense. That fear was expressed from the start, often in a contrived reactionary form. But it is an important issue, no matter how foolish the terms in which some people have raised it; and it has not yet been adequately faced. Modern writers, progressivists all, produce a neat set of apologetics

to justify the spending of a very high proportion of the funds on types of fiction which cannot by any stretch of the imagination be called "improving" or valuable.

The argument runs as follows. Libraries belong to the community and so must be "catholic" in their holdings (K. C. Harrison, *The Library and the Community* (now in its third edition) rightly quotes McColvin, in the famous report of 1942, putting this point of view in exemplary terms). Libraries must therefore cater for people's "recreational" needs. They should not be highbrow, snooty, elitist in their attitudes to popular fiction. A further turn of the screw resurrects the old and highly dubious "ascending ever upwards" model, by which readers are assumed to move naturally from virtually pulp-fiction to George Eliot. A modern variant of this last notion points to the increased demand for novels which have been dramatized on television (the argument is that if they had been read last night, they would have been read now). We all tend to take the semi-will for the detached deed. I would much rather defend the use of public money on allotments, swimming pools and parks than use such common-sense arguments to defend the buying of much popular fiction. They sound like a justification of free, public authority bingo.

Librarians do not have to be what is fashionably called "narrowly moralistic" in their judgments of quality. Their first duty is still to the idea of a "self-improvement" with that phrase very imaginatively interpreted. To do less is a form of false democracy, which the whole history of the library service itself should call into question.

## Book of rules

By D. J. Urquhart

**JAMES THOMPSON:**  
*A History of the Principles of Librarianship*  
236pp. Clive Bingley. £4.75.

One wonders what James Thompson in his title means by "history" and the "principles of librarianship". Was he concerned with the application of general principles to the practice of librarianship or was he concerned with some of the principles which are more peculiar to librarianship such as "supply creates demand"?

On the approach to history I was at first assured by these words in the preface: "I seek to establish the historical foundations for a current theory of librarianship". But as I read the book I began to doubt whether the author had kept to his objective and I became more and more confused about his idea of a principle of librarianship.

The principles of librarianship are something which every student should know and every librarian should be using as a guide to his actions. A principle is not a fact but it may be deduced from facts.

For instance, it is a fact that the number of publications in the world is increasing. It is also a fact that most libraries contain a decreasing percentage of these publications. The principle of librarianship which can be deduced from these facts can be expressed in the phrase: "no library is an island". Similarly it is possible to deduce from the conditions under which libraries operate today that they should have regard to cost-effectiveness and the law of diminishing returns. But I could find no references to such principles. Instead I found that the author's approach had led him to some "principles" of doubtful validity today.

The book contains a chapter on the old collections. It includes a survey of libraries dating from the Library of Alexandria and earlier and purports to establish "the basic principles of librarianship that libraries must grow to". It could not help feeling that had the author devoted more time to history and more to the current situation and even glanced at special libraries he would have realized that some libraries can be quite effective without growing.

The chapter on conservation leads to a non-principle of librarianship—that it is society that libraries serve, not the individual, which really conserves libraries.

Perhaps this will provide an excuse for the British Library if ever there is an outcry about the physical deterioration of the collection in Bloomsbury.

The inability of the book to live up to its title is illustrated by the chapter on the classification and cataloguing of libraries. This begins with references to the catalogues of ancient times and proceeds via Panniz to modern times.

The fourteenth principle, which is told in a final chapter called "The Principles Revealed", is that "a library must be arranged in some kind of order and a list of contents provided", and the fifteenth principle, that "a library should be arranged according to subject". It would seem from this book that these principles are centuries old and that modern experiences have not modified them. Had the author forgotten about "lay tablets and concentrated on the past 150 years he might have discovered some more modern principles. Nowadays, because of the imperfection of library collections, a research worker must know where to go to find his subject, irrespective of whether a particular library holds what interests him.

The subject arrangement of monographs in a closed access library is surely a waste of time, and as for periodicals—but the author never mentions them. He is told in a final chapter called "The Principles Revealed", is that "a library must be arranged in some kind of order and a list of contents provided", and the fifteenth principle, that "a library should be arranged according to subject". It would seem from this book that these principles are centuries old and that modern experiences have not modified them. Had the author forgotten about "lay tablets and concentrated on the past 150 years he might have discovered some more modern principles. Nowadays, because of the imperfection of library collections, a research worker must know where to go to find his subject, irrespective of whether a particular library holds what interests him.

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## In the public service

By D. J. Foskett

This past year librarians, in the words of a writer in the *TLS* in 1972, have been "militated to advertise our science or hobby by holding a centenary", for it was in October 1877 that a group of distinguished gentlemen called for the founding of a Library Association.

Our founding fathers had had the idea in mind for some time, but the actual event was also inspired by the successful launching, in the previous year, of the American Library Association. They were, mostly, school-librarians who brought with them the prestige of their offices: the British Museum, the Bodleian, the London Institution. But among their important aims was the development of the public library movement as an essential service for an educated democracy, and this aim is still sustained, despite the attacks and mad attacks on public library funds that have been made in some quarters. The involvement of public library authorities can be seen in the fact that, although it was until recently that F. T. Barratt of Glasgow became our first public librarian president, he had already been preceded by no fewer than six chairmen or members of public library committees.

Our aims have, taken all round, been realized in the sense that we in Britain enjoy what is probably the best network of libraries, of all types, available anywhere. We have few to rival in size the great American collections; we may have less closely integrated with their communities as the Scandinavians; it is unlikely that we pursue our aims with the same clarity of purpose as the Scandinavians. But we reach a high level in all departments, so that it is not for nothing that the Minister for the Arts can say with conviction that our library services are the envy of the rest of the world.

We can also assert that our Library Association has played a key role in this achievement. None of us would claim that the Association has reached all its objectives. Some would see the foundation of the Standing Conference of National and University Libraries of the Institute of Information Scientists, as clear proof of failure. But it is clear that persons engaged in library work in this country, in the words of the Royal Charter granted by Queen Victoria in 1878, "The Library Association has reached all its objectives. Some would see the foundation of the Standing Conference of National and University Libraries of the Institute of Information Scientists, as clear proof of failure. But it is clear that persons engaged in library work in this country, in the words of the Royal Charter granted by Queen Victoria in 1878, "The Library Association has reached all its objectives. 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